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General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

17th plenary meeting
Saturday, 25 September 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Address by His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ramos-Horta: I have been given such a bad spot on the speaking list that I feel as if I am in a Fellini movie, speaking to an empty Hall. Still, because I believe in ghosts, I believe that the friendly ghosts of those who are not present are here to listen, and I profusely thank those who bothered to come on this Saturday afternoon.

Mr. President, in compensation for my having the worst possible time slot in the general debate, when I see you this afternoon I hope you will have a nice box of Swiss chocolates to give to me.

We will not distribute the written version of my speech because no one reads them anyway and it is a waste of paper and money. However, anyone who is curious enough about my speech will be able to find it on the General Assembly's website. It is a lengthy speech — although I will not compete with Presidents Obama, Ahmadinejad or Chávez — so I will skip through much of it, out of respect for the representatives who have been here for a week listening to many speeches.

Still, I would fail my upbringing if I were not to thank the Mayor of New York and New Yorkers for welcoming us to their city. We sympathize with the residents of this city for the inconveniences we cause them by our presence, even if most people would agree that the United Nations and the numerous meetings held here throughout the year bring enormous tangible and non-quantifiable benefits to the city. I also would like thank the United States federal authorities for their exceptional efforts and professionalism in providing us with a secure and friendly environment.

I have never met Mayor Bloomberg, but he has gone up in our esteem and respect because of his intellectual clarity and moral courage in standing up for the rights of American Muslims in building a cultural centre and a sacred place of worship in lower Manhattan as a venue for reflection, learning and fraternity among cultures and religions. What better place is there than lower Manhattan, near the World Trade Center, to signal the revulsion of American Muslims and moderate Muslims all over the world at the actions of some extremists? I congratulate Mayor Bloomberg for his moral courage and integrity.

I was not present in this Hall when President Ahmadinejad of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed

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this Assembly a few days ago. I was at Columbia University, addressing an equally important gathering of young students and academics from many countries, cultures and religions. So I did not hear President Ahmadinejad's latest intellectual concoctions in this Assembly. I will not question the right of anyone to speak his mind. President Ahmadinejad is entitled to believe in and regurgitate whatever intellectual, philosophical or theological concoctions his unique mind may fabricate. However, I do not agree that any of us should disregard the basic rules and practices of conduct among leaders by uttering obscenities in this Assembly. What President Ahmadinejad said in this forum in regard to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center was an obscenity. He went too far, as he has done many times before in this Assembly and in other forums, as when he has questioned the facts of the Holocaust.

Otherwise, we fully subscribe to Iran's legitimate right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and we caution the Powers that be not to hasten in reaching conclusions that may lead to irreversible, catastrophic decisions. We do have serious doubts, however, about the reliability and safety of nuclear energy. Let us not forget the lessons of the Three Mile Island accident, which occurred at 4 a.m. on 28 March 1979 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, or the even worse Chernobyl nuclear meltdown of April 1986. The recent catastrophic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico would pale by comparison with the blow-up of a nuclear energy facility. We do not know whether Iranian rulers do or do not have the desire to be an armed nuclear Power. What we do know, however, is that the possession of nuclear weapons is not a shortcut to super-Power status, as some in Asia seem to think, and does not insure anyone against twenty-first century conventional and non-conventional security threats.

Nuclear weapons were developed as a result of the tragic experiences of the Second World War and of mutual suspicion and fears pervasive among the Powers at that time. They have become obsolete. That is proven by the fact that the mighty Soviet nuclear and conventional arsenals were not able to prevent the implosion of its Empire, the liberation of hundreds of millions of people or the reunification of Germany. Nuclear weapons are not going to be of much help in the ongoing ethnic, religious and border disputes in Asia. We pray to God the Almighty and the Merciful that these weapons and others, chemical and biological, do not ever fall into the hands of extremist non-State entities.

We gathered here from 20 to 22 September to review the progress — or lack of it — on the pledges we solemnly made before our peoples in 2000 to eliminate or at least halve poverty by 2015. In Timor-Leste, we regained independence in 2002, and in the first years of our independence we set out to rebuild our country from the ashes of the violence of the past, lay the foundations of a functioning democratic State, heal our wounds, reconcile our divided communities and normalize relations with past external adversaries. In only eight years and in spite of the overwhelming challenges facing us, we have navigated out of the storms to a new period of peace, stability and economic growth.

Timor-Leste is a least developed country, affected by pervasive poverty. We are still a fragile country, partly because we are only eight years old, and being an infant country, all the institutions of the State are young and fragile. However, the Almighty and the Merciful has blessed us with generous natural resources, such as oil and gas, enabling us to accelerate our overall development.

Timor-Leste was not yet independent in 2000, and it was not until our first Millennium Development Goal report was issued in 2004 that the first targets were set. For the past three years, Timor-Leste has enjoyed real peace and a robust economic growth of over 12 per cent. In the past two years, poverty levels have decreased by as much as 9 per cent. Infant mortality and under-five mortality rates have been reduced and have already reached the 2015 target. School enrolment has increased from 65 per cent in 2007 to 83 per cent in 2009-2010. Adult illiteracy is being gradually eliminated thanks to a joint programme between Timor-Leste and Cuba. We anticipate that, within two to three years, Timor-Leste will be completely free of illiteracy. About 30 per cent of our general State budget is allocated to public health and education. This turn-around is due largely thanks to aggressive public financing of social such programmes as direct cash transfers to the elderly, widows, the handicapped and veterans, and to determined efforts to expand cultivated areas and increase food production.

The first of the 800 Timorese medical students studying in Cuba have returned home. In addition to those studying medicine in Cuba, there are 200 more

enrolled in the medical school of our national university. In addition, more than 200 Cuban doctors have been assigned to Timor-Leste since 2004, working side by side with Timorese doctors and nurses delivering services to the remotest corners of the country and training our medical and health personnel. The members of the famous Cuban Medical Brigade are true missionaries, as deserving of the Nobel Peace Prize as Mother Teresa.

In Timor-Leste, this year we will finalize our own road map, the 2011-2030 Strategic Development Plan, which will lift our people from centuries of poverty to the level of an upper-middle-income country by 2030.

With regard to the management of our petroleum resources, we are pleased to note that the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in its most recent report of 1 July, rated Timor-Leste number one in Asia and number three in the world for sound, transparent and effective management of our oil and gas revenues.

Women make up almost 30 per cent of the deputies in our national Parliament. Key cabinet positions in the executive branch — finance, justice, social solidarity, prosecutor-general and so on — are held by women. A youth parliament, comprising 130 youth parliamentarians ranging in ages from 12 to 17 years, has been elected and will have its first formal sitting in November. I am pleased that our expectations on balanced gender representation were in fact exceeded. The youth parliament counts 68 girl and 62 boy deputies.

Timor-Leste is proud to have one of the most humanist Constitutions in the world. It prohibits the death penalty and its maximum prison sentence is 25 years. We have also ratified all core international human rights treaties. Our Constitution gives primacy to international law over domestic law, such that all our laws must conform to international law.

As the Head of State guided by humanist beliefs and the relevant provisions of our Constitution, I have issued pardons to individuals who have been tried and found guilty by the courts and have served a number of years with good behaviour. We believe that the pursuit of justice cannot be dissociated from other overwhelming values, such as compassion and understanding of mitigating circumstances.

I wish now to turn to some international issues. We appeal to President Barack Obama to sign an executive order releasing five Cuban citizens who have languished in United States jails for over 10 years and denied family visits. Even visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross have not been authorized. The United States should likewise lift the draconian financial and economic sanctions and trade embargo against Cuba. The Cuban people are among the few in the world who are still suffering the inequities of the cold-war era. It would seem that, for some in the United States and in particular in the State of Florida, the cold war is not over.

The situation in Myanmar is an immensely complex one. It is a vast country fragmented along ethnic lines and plagued by numerous armed groups fighting with different agendas. Based on our own experience, we believe that in order to manage such complex challenges, be it in our own country, Myanmar or anywhere else, we must all show wisdom and engage in patient dialogue with those who do not agree with us so that together we can end conflict and pull our countries out of poverty.

With respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we commend the Israeli and Palestinian leaders for their renewed dialogue under the auspices of the United States Administration. To those in Palestine who, in spite of decades of suffering and humiliation, have resisted the temptation of extremism and violence, I bow. To those in Israel who have championed the cause of peace and the rights of the Palestinian people, I will say that they represent the very best of the Jewish people — a people who more than anyone else on Earth should understand the suffering and desire of others for freedom.

We urge Hamas to show statesmanship by recognizing the State of Israel. Extremism, fanaticism and indiscriminate violence do harm to the noble Palestinian quest for dignity and freedom. At the same time, we submit that Hamas and Hezbollah are genuine popular movements deeply rooted in the plight of millions of poor, dispossessed, alienated and angry in the Middle East. Labelling them terrorists and refusing to engage and build bridges with such groups is, in our view, not a sound policy.

We urge Israel, a country founded on 5,000 years of history and born of centuries of persecution and war, to show the wisdom and generosity of the Jews by ending the Gaza blockade, allowing unhindered access

for humanitarian assistance, and ending the land-grabbing and colonization of the West Bank.

On the question of Western Sahara, the aborted decolonization of that territory and the endless plight of hundreds of thousands of Saharans in camps in Algeria constitute an indictment of the international community. This is not an issue as complex as Afghanistan or Palestine. How can we believe that there will be an early resolution of these other seemingly intractable problems when there seems to be little political will to solve the Western Sahara problem?

I believe that I have already exceeded the time allocated to me by one minute and 35 seconds. I have a few more words to say about foreign aid and climate change, but I will skip that in order to respect everybody else, particularly those following me. Allow me only to say two words about United Nations reform.

More than 60 years after its founding, the United Nations has yet to undertake meaningful reform to make it more representative of the world of the twenty-first century and to become more effective. And we are not talking only about an expanded and more representative Security Council. We are talking about making the United Nations and its many agencies and programmes less bureaucratic and more efficient in their internal management and service delivery.

In regard to the Security Council, we restate our view that it has to be expanded to accommodate the new demographic and economic realities of the twenty-first century. Major regional Powers like India and Brazil must be granted permanent member status in the Security Council.

In concluding, on behalf of our people I thank the international community for the steady and generous assistance provided to us in our years of need. We would not have been able to achieve the progress of the past years without the understanding of our friends and partners.

We can all do better in Timor-Leste and elsewhere, and we must. With humility we acknowledge our failings and limitations. We are determined to live up to the expectations of our people and to lead them towards a peaceful and prosperous future.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste for the statement he has just made.

Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Klaus: First, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the very responsible post of President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

I have the privilege of representing the Czech Republic, a country in the very heart of Europe that has been actively involved in United Nations activities from the very beginning and will continue to be so. We are actively involved in a number of United Nations bodies, and Czech soldiers and experts have participated in United Nations peacekeeping missions for many decades. It is in our interests for this Organization to remain a respected high-level forum, contributing to prosperity, stability and peaceful solutions to conflicts around the world.

It has been said here many times in the past few days that today's world is very different from that of 1945, when this Organization was founded by 51 States. It now consists of 192. That is not merely a quantitative change; it is much more. My country is therefore deeply convinced that the structure of the United Nations also needs to be different, especially that of the Security Council, which should be reformed to reflect the geopolitical, economic and demographic reality of the twenty-first century. It is frustrating that discussions of such reform have gone on for the past

16 years without results. It is time to come up with concrete results, and my country is ready to support them.

Changes of this kind are necessary; on the other hand, some things must continue unchanged. I do not believe that the United Nations needs to search for a new mission. Its goals should remain those defined in the original Charter: to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, and to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems. The United Nations should not diverge from these principles. It should not search for alternative or substitute projects to replace those that enhance peace, freedom and democracy. It should remain an intergovernmental platform, based on the plurality of views of its Member States and on mutual respect for their sometimes differing positions.

Let me briefly touch on two issues that form part of the current United Nations agenda. The first is the worldwide economic crisis and the methods used to overcome it. I am afraid that we are moving in the wrong direction. The anti-crisis measures that have been proposed and already partly implemented follow from the assumption that the crisis was a failure of markets and that the right way out is more regulation of markets. This is a mistaken assumption. It will not be possible to prevent any future crises by implementing substantial, market-damaging macroeconomic and regulatory Government interventions, as is being done now. That will only destroy markets, and with them the chances for economic growth and prosperity in developed and developing countries alike.

The solution to this or any other crisis does not lie in increasing protectionism, and it is a positive factor that most Governments have behaved quite rationally in this respect. Nor does the solution lie in more bureaucracy, in creating new governmental or supranational agencies, or in aiming at global governance of the world's economy. On the contrary, this is the time for international organizations, including the United Nations, to reduce their spending, slim down their administrations and leave the solutions to the Governments of the Member States, which are directly accountable to the citizens of their countries.

Developing countries should not be prevented from growing economically. They need access to foreign markets and they need free trade. It was in this forum last year that I emphasized that we must pay attention to the costs and benefits of our decisions. Developing countries must not be forced into agreements on ever more ambitious targets in the fight against climate change, particularly at a time when the developed countries themselves are far from meeting those targets. The United Nations should not have an all-encompassing agenda. It should not turn away from political topics towards scientific ones. It is here not to determine what science is, but to engage its Member States in rational and reasoned debate about political issues. The most harmful political debate we have witnessed in the past couple of years is about the climate and global warming.

We should not give up on elemental values and principles that most of us share, and this brings me to the second issue I wish to mention here today — nuclear non proliferation. In April, my country hosted an important event during which the President of Russia and the President of the United States signed the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. We see the Treaty as an important step forward and as a visible sign of our efforts to make our complicated world safer. Let us hope that it will be taken further in the foreseeable future.

We do not dispute the right of any country to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes, but it must do so in a responsible way. It is not possible for some countries to ignore agreed and respected international standards, to threaten stability in their regions and to increase the dangers of proliferation.

The United Nations is a unique forum at which small and big countries alike are represented. They are countries with different political, economic and social systems; different neighbours; different historical experiences and geopolitical positions; and, more importantly, different levels of income, wealth and development. This is precisely what makes the United Nations unique and irreplaceable. Instead of increasingly becoming a source of funds for various, sometimes very dubious non-governmental organizations that — without any accountability or control — seek to profit from United Nations activities, the United Nations should strive to be an efficient body in which States and their peoples are represented. Its task is not to push for global governance and play the central role in it. The United Nations exists primarily to enhance friendly relations among its Members and

to look for solutions to problems that cannot be confined to national boundaries.

I wish you every success in your office, Mr. President, and I would like to assure you that the Czech Republic will continue to be an active Member of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Czech Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Anote Tong, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kiribati

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kiribati.

Mr. Anote Tong, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kiribati, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Anote Tong, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kiribati, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Tong: Every year, we gather in this General Assembly Hall to take stock of our achievements in the pursuit of a more peaceful, more secure and a better world for all citizens of the global community.

As it emerged from the ashes of devastating world wars, the United Nations heralded a new era and a new world order of international cooperation in the pursuit of international peace and security. It is premised on the principles of sovereign equality and peaceful coexistence.

Taking stock of what we have achieved since then, we can say today that we have been successful in preventing many of the scourges that have challenged humanity, including world wars and widespread disease. But as we rid our global society of those injustices, new and emerging forms of injustices now threaten our global security.

I believe that climate change remains the greatest moral challenge of our time. While it affects all nations of this planet, the irony is that it is the poorest and smallest countries, which have made the least contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, that are paying the ultimate price in order that the lifestyles and development agenda of some countries may be maintained. Where is the justice in that?

The Copenhagen Conference failed to meet the expectations of many, but especially of those countries on the front line for which the threat of climate change is no longer a matter of speculation but one of survival, and therefore of great urgency. There is a tendency in much of the world to view climate change as a distant and gradual process whose harmful effects are remote possible and not worthy of much attention. I have said in various forums that, for low-lying island countries like Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Maldives and the Marshall Islands, among other similarly vulnerable countries, climate change is a matter of survival and of increasing urgency.

Already we are witnessing major damage to infrastructure and property as a consequence of higher-than-normal tides and storm surges. Coastal erosion in heavily populated areas is occurring at a rate that exceeds the Governments' capacity to respond. Lack of resources is exacerbating the situation. Coastlines continue to be eroded and homes and properties continue to be damaged.

Long before our islands are inundated by the rising seas, they will become uninhabitable as freshwater aquifers are contaminated by saltwater intrusion from rising tides. Increasing demand for resources to undertake effective responses to climate change impacts will become a dominant feature of our development agenda. I truly hope, therefore, that I can during this session communicate the deep sense of urgency and growing sense of despair besetting our people in the face of this oncoming catastrophe.

On the basis of current scientific projections, the Copenhagen Accord does not provide the means to guarantee our future survival, and therefore we did not sign it in Copenhagen. We have subsequently associated ourselves with the Accord, essentially for the following reasons. First, we are of the belief that the Accord at least represents a positive step towards

an international governance system on climate change. Secondly, we have the expectation that further, forthcoming scientific evidence will unequivocally determine the targets to be agreed upon. Finally and most importantly, we believe that our support for the Accord will ensure the flow of urgently needed adaptation funds. I regret to say that, to date, we have not been able to access any of the fast-start funds pledged.

I acknowledge that many elements of any international regime on climate change will take several years to conclude, but I also believe that there is common ground on which there is no real debate. The urgent need for the flow of adaptation funds to address the more urgent adaptation needs of the most vulnerable countries is a matter over which there is general consensus. It is not a matter to negotiate or procrastinate over; if we do, it will be too late for some countries and any subsequent agreement will be meaningless. It is also important that adaptation funds not be regarded as additional development funds by either development partners or recipient countries, but be provided and applied for the sole purpose of adaptation to climate change.

I believe that we need to modify our approach to Mexico if we are to succeed. I believe that we have a moral obligation to reach agreement on a legally binding framework that regulates our ability to pursue policies that harm others. For very obvious reasons, I do not believe that any country should have the right to exercise sovereignty over its greenhouse gas emissions. In my view, any alternative to a legally binding framework is simply unacceptable and would have potentially destabilizing consequences.

The experience at Copenhagen taught us that if we are to make any progress, we must acknowledge our differences and discuss ways around them rather than allow them to dominate the international agenda behind the process. In this regard, we believe that trust and mutual respect are indispensable to the process.

Climate change offers the international community an opportunity to reflect upon the future direction of our relations as sovereign nations. I believe that the climate change challenge provides us with the opportunity to be more innovative in our concept of international governance. Our current arrangement is similar to that of State Governments not accepting federal authority within a federal system. One can imagine the chaos.

While other countries are focusing their efforts and resources on their sustainable development, we, the most vulnerable countries, continue to spend the limited resources we have on fighting the continuous onslaught of the rising seas and storm surges on our homes and livelihoods. It is no surprise therefore that we are off-track to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of our sustainable development agenda under our national development plan, the Pacific Plan and the Mauritius Strategy. For every step we take forward, we are knocked back two or three due to the challenges we face, which are exacerbated by climate change.

In this regard, it is imperative that the pledges made at Copenhagen for fast-start funds to assist vulnerable countries like Kiribati to adapt to the impact of climate change and sea-level rise be mobilized at the earliest possible opportunity. This is a matter of great and increasing urgency.

We acknowledge the critical role of our environment as the pillar of sustainable development. Maintaining the health of our biodiversity within our oceans and ecosystems faces the very same challenges that we have so far failed to address in respect of our atmosphere. It is imperative, therefore, that we undertake the commitment to put in place now the measures needed in order to avoid the mistakes we have made with climate change. In pursuit of this, we in Kiribati have designated the largest marine protected area and marine World Heritage Site, the Phoenix Islands Protected Area. It covers an area of more than 400,000 square kilometres, representing some 11 per cent of our exclusive economic zone. The Protected Area is the result of a collaborative partnership with Conservation International and the New England Aquarium. It provides a natural breeding ground for tropical fisheries and ocean ecosystems. It is a natural laboratory for the study of such ecosystems and the impact of climate change in a pristine area virtually untouched by human activity.

The preservation of that Area is our gift to humanity and our contribution to international biodiversity conservation efforts to significantly reduce biodiversity loss in this International Year of Biodiversity. Even now, as we confront the possibility that our islands will become uninhabitable within the

century due to the rising sea level, we recognize the value of protecting something that is the common heritage of humanity.

Kiribati and the Pacific are committed to the sustainable conservation and management of their ocean ecosystem through the Micronesia Challenge, the Coral Triangle Initiative, the Nauru Agreement and the many other national efforts throughout the region to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems. At its meeting last month in Vanuatu, the Pacific Islands Forum endorsed the Pacific Oceanscape Framework, which promotes collaboration and cooperation among marine protected areas in the Pacific region. Initiatives such as the Pacific 2020 Challenge and a novel Pangaea World concept of green development through knowledge economies link those initiatives to the countries of the Pacific Rim and beyond.

Our message to the international community is that the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems in the Pacific is not important only to the sustainable development of Pacific peoples. It is also of vital significance to the rest of the world. Support from the international community in protecting ecosystems in the Pacific, and indeed elsewhere, should not be viewed as a handout, but as an investment for future generations of this planet.

Last year, we all called for a new world order. We all acknowledged that our great Organization must evolve to reflect the realities of our time — a time in which new and emerging security threats and injustices such as climate change are challenging the credibility of our international system of governance; a time in which the future survival of some nations is seriously in question; a time when all those countries with the ability to do so must contribute to the prevention of that calamity or be forever judged in history.

We note that tensions remain high in certain regions, notably in the Middle East and the Korean peninsula. For the sake of those of us on the front line of the major global challenges, let us pray that great understanding and stability will prevail. For while we, as small nations, may seem not to be affected by such events, they serve to distract the focus of attention away from the real challenges facing the international community and our planet today.

It is gratifying to note the easing of tensions and improvement of relations across the Taiwan Straits — no doubt, a most welcome development for all in that region. We also welcome the inclusion of Taiwan in the World Health Assembly, and we hope that similar understanding will prevail in respect of other international institutions in which Taiwan can participate and contribute meaningfully for the good of humanity.

As we chart the path towards a new world order, we must address the fundamental threats to the very existence of the units that make up our Organization. As the so called community of nations, we must be able to guarantee the survival of members of our community by addressing this defining challenge of our era. Climate change must be addressed before it is too late for those nations on the front line and for the whole of humanity.

At this time, we need compassionate, visionary and responsible leadership to direct our path towards a more secure and more just world. We need to share the solution, and we need to act as one in Mexico. We owe it to our future generations to act, and to act now. Maintaining the status quo is simply not an option.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Kiribati for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Anote Tong, President, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kiribati, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

Address by Mr. Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi.

Mr. Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Rufyikiri (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to convey to the Assembly the warm and fraternal greetings of His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, who has just been re-elected for a second term of five years. He had planned to take part in these meetings himself, but the Unity International Foundation insisted on awarding him the Rising Star of Africa prize for his role in building and promoting peace, and that led him to delegate attending the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals and the general debate of the Assembly's sixty-fifth session to me.

We wish to congratulate the President of the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session and to reiterate the thanks of the Burundi delegation to his predecessor for his remarkable work. We also pay due tribute to our Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his involvement in the follow-up to Assembly resolutions and for the important guidance that he continues to give our Organization. His visit to Burundi on 9 June 2010 is a clear sign of his commitment to peacebuilding and to strengthening the democracy regained in our country at great cost.

Burundi is participating in the sixty-fifth session following the top-to-bottom renewal of national institutions. For the first time in Burundi's history, the democratically elected institutions have completed their term of office. That powerfully demonstrates the political maturity and resolve of the people of Burundi to break with the turbulent past in order to invest in the peace, stability and reconciliation that are prerequisites to sustainable development.

We take this opportunity to reiterate the thanks of the Government and people of Burundi for the role of the international community, the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, the European Parliament, the East African Community, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States, friendly countries and various organizations in participating in the funding and observation of the aforementioned elections, which were peaceful, transparent and fair and in accordance with international standards.

For its part, the party that won the elections is aware of the absolute need to promote national reconciliation and political tolerance as much as it can. From the day after the first round of the election and then in his inaugural speech, the President of the Republic himself expressed his resolve and that of the winning party to govern Burundi for and with all the people of Burundi. Furthermore, Burundi's Constitution also provides for political inclusion mechanisms in managing the State's affairs.

During the new Parliament, the Government of Burundi is committed to following its peacebuilding programme and strengthening security for all, in particular by completing disarmament of the civilian population and the socio-economic reinsertion of demobilized individuals and returnees. Furthermore, the Government of Burundi will particularly emphasize regional cooperation and integration, as well as enhancing security in its geographical area, together with neighbouring countries.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Promoting good governance in its various dimensions is also one of the main concerns of Burundi's Government. With regard to political governance, it will continue to promote the rights of political parties, including by strengthening the spirit of dialogue between political partners.

With respect to economic governance, there will be efforts to improve business conditions to encourage both national and foreign investment. The Government of Burundi reaffirms its determination and zero-tolerance commitment to combat financial corruption and fraud.

In the area of the judiciary, every possible effort will be made to combat impunity with respect to any type of crime, and transitional justice will be promoted during this Parliament.

Concerning socio-economic development, the Government of Burundi will focus every effort possible on combating poverty, in particular through development of priority production sectors, namely, agriculture and livestock, energy, social infrastructure, tourism, environmental renewal and new information and communication technologies. We will give special attention to developing public-private partnerships with a view to sustained economic growth.

In the social domain, the Government of Burundi will concentrate on the education and health sectors to combat ignorance and disease. To meet crucial needs in those areas, many schools and clinics will be built

throughout the country. Furthermore, the services in these two sectors will also be improved.

Relaunching and promoting the Burundian economy depends also on consolidating regional groups and developing projects and programmes that integrate common interests. In that framework, the Government of Burundi will play a larger role in the promotion of regional organizations of which it is a member, such as the Economic Community of the Great Lake Countries, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, whose Executive Secretariat we host, the East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and others. That ambitious programme requires consistent support for its implementation. Thus Burundi clearly requires various forms of support.

To that end, we take the opportunity of this forum to make a strong appeal to the international community, to the United Nations system and to the countries represented here and to charitable organizations to continue their tireless support to the Government of Burundi with the ultimate aim of allowing it to lay the foundations for long-term development and for solidifying the achievements made in terms of peace, democracy, stability and reconciliation.

In the context of international relations and relations between States, Burundi is convinced that the issue of global governance in general and economic governance in particular remains a major concern of most of our countries. Thus promotion of equity must become the leitmotif and the warhorse of the organizations of which our respective States are full members.

Burundi desires additional efforts to allow developing countries sufficient representation in the international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and others. We believe that is the way to promote a fairer and more geographically balanced world.

Burundi is committed to the African Union's position on Security Council reform, in particular that the African continent should have two permanent seats with all of the privileges held by the five permanent members.

Today the entire world is confronting a number of challenges and natural disasters, some of which are linked to climate change. Developing countries in general and African countries in particular are the most harshly affected, because of a lack of resources to deal with such challenges.

It is high time that countries agree to take more audacious measures in order to provide the financing necessary to combat the negative effects of climate change, by stimulating and promoting in particular technology transfer and without forgetting capacity-building in the poorest and thus the most vulnerable countries. By effectively combating the effects of climate change, our countries will inevitably resolve in part the problem of food insecurity, which is also a significant threat to sustainable development.

In that light, we call upon the wealthy countries to act in favour of developing countries, particularly post-conflict countries such as Burundi, through multiple, ongoing and significant support to key social and economic sectors. It is urgent that all development partners respect the promises they have made to developing countries in general and those countries in Africa in particular by increasing official development assistance.

Burundi — whose stability has benefited from the excellent attention and considerable support of United Nations entities, the international community and friendly countries — remains very concerned by the issue of the maintenance of international peace and security. It reaffirms its commitment to cooperate with the United Nations in consolidating the achievements made with regard to peace and stability and in handling the finances necessary for its socio-economic development.

Furthermore, in terms of international solidarity, all countries must combine efforts to make this world a harbour of peace. For that reason, Burundi is taking an active part in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire to bring peace to that country, the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

With respect to Somalia, Burundi is committed on the ground despite the many problems its troops are encountering. We reiterate our request to the United Nations with regard to improving the living and working conditions of the AMISOM forces. We take this opportunity to recall the promises made in that

regard by the Secretary-General when he visited Burundi on 9 June. We also call on other countries to deploy additional troops so that AMISOM can become a truly continental mission able to fulfil its mandate.

In closing, Burundi welcomes the determination and commitment of the United Nations to make our world one of peace, democracy, tolerance and development, where individual and collective rights and freedoms are clearly protected. Therefore, we encourage everyone to go forward towards that noble mission. Our wish is that the next session of the General Assembly may take place in a context where most of the conflicts currently threatening some countries and the world as a whole will have been resolved.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Second Vice-President of Burundi for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Alik L. Alik, Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mr. Alik L. Alik, Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Alik L. Alik, Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Alik (Federated States of Micronesia): Allow me to congratulate Mr. Deiss on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. He has taken on that formidable task at a crucial period for our United Nations. I assure him of Micronesia's full support. I would also like to pay tribute to his esteemed predecessor for his distinguished leadership.

Sadly, I wish to begin my statement by expressing the sincere sympathy of the people and Government of the Federated States of Micronesia for the many victims of recent natural disasters everywhere. Having been victims of natural disasters ourselves, our hearts go out to the victims of the recent hurricanes, earthquakes, mudslides and floods that are now occurring on an unprecedented scale and with increasing frequency and devastating intensity all over our planet. Overwhelming evidence points to one common denominator in all those events, and that is global climate change.

I am deeply honoured to address the General Assembly, at its sixty-fifth session, for the first time on behalf of the Federated States of Micronesia. This Assembly accords Micronesia and the small island developing States an extraordinary privilege to bring to the whole world the most pressing issues affecting us that demand our collective response.

Despite the many years of negotiations to curb its devastating effects, the climate change crisis continues to haunt us. The negotiating process has moved along very slowly, while in stark contrast the rapid increases in the incidence and severity of environmental hazards continue to take their toll, with devastating results. I cannot help but think of the needless human suffering everywhere, and what the future holds for my country and the small island developing States if business continues as usual.

As a small island developing State, Micronesia's future is intrinsically linked to the global climate. That is why we are gravely concerned by the acute environmental problems related to the extreme vulnerability of our islands to sea-level rise and climate change. Those threats are indisputable, and delays in adopting a comprehensive and legally binding agreement to avert this global disaster are without excuse.

In Micronesia, we are deeply disappointed at the glacial progress in the negotiating sessions and climate change meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. At the same time, we are growing increasingly alarmed by the prospect of shrinking ambitions for the meeting in Cancún, Mexico, later this year. That is not an acceptable response to a crisis of enormous proportions, certainly not for Micronesia and not for any of the small island developing States, who need fast action. This is an issue of survival for us.

We must find a better response — a genuine response that supports mitigation and adaptation measures that will achieve significant reductions in

greenhouse gas emissions and thus preserve the integrity of our Earth's environment and also the livelihoods of its inhabitants. My island nation and the small island developing States, for that matter, are not major contributors to the causes of climate change. All present know that. But we are nevertheless determined in our efforts to contribute to finding solutions.

For its part, Micronesia continues to take the lead to combat climate change by utilizing the opportunities under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Through the Montreal Protocol we can solve a big part of the climate change problem. That is why Micronesia has developed a proposal with the support of Mauritius, the Marshall Islands, Seychelles and the Philippines that calls for the phasing down of the production and use of hydrofluorocarbons. Under our proposal we will be able to eliminate one of the greenhouse gases listed under the Kyoto Protocol, and we are encouraged that other countries, such as Canada, the United States and Mexico, already have come forward with similar proposals.

Frankly, we have been delighted by the interest shown in our proposal so far, and I commend it to the Assembly's attention. Today, I encourage all delegations to consider supporting it. Our collective action is imperative if we are to effectively curb and reverse global warming. That is the kind of collaboration that I encourage here.

Just as we are delighted by our Montreal Protocol proposal, we are equally proud of an initiative within our Pacific region, launched in August by the Governments of the Republics of the Marshall Islands and Palau and my own Government at the margins of the forty-first Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Vanuatu. This is the Green Energy Micronesia Initiative, which calls for a 20 per cent improvement in energy efficiency by suppliers in areas such as transportation and electric power generation, a 30 per cent improvement in energy use by end users and a 20 per cent electricity generation through renewable energy by 2020. As island countries with a total dependence on fossil fuels for our energy generation, it is no longer economically, financially and environmentally sustainable to continue down that path. We must look towards developing, utilizing and embracing our renewable sources of energy.

Our prospect for success will remain grim with our limited capacity and available financial resources. We encourage and call upon our development partners and the international community to support our efforts, including through increased financial support, transfer of technology and capacity-building.

In our seemingly idyllic settings as island nations, it may seem to many around the world that we live an easy life and demand action only from others. However, the reality is that our island nations are actively playing our part in maintaining, and promoting the protection of, our Planet Earth. We accept our responsibility for conserving the biodiversity of our islands and waters and for using resources in a sustainable manner.

That is why Micronesia and our Micronesian sister nations the Republics of the Marshall Islands and of Palau, as well as the Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, continue to promote the Micronesia Challenge to conserve at least 30 per cent of the near-shore marine resources and 20 per cent of terrestrial resources across our Micronesian region by 2020.

Given our individual limitations, we can confront these challenges only through regional collective actions. I want to express our utmost gratitude to those countries and international organizations that continue to support the Micronesia Challenge and help us achieve our goals. Being small island countries with limited resources, we see realistic success in collaborative partnership with the international community.

Micronesia will continue to address the protection of the ocean and its resources. As a Pacific island country with one of the largest exclusive economic zones in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, we ascribe particular importance to the ocean and its resources. The ocean has a fundamental and critical bearing on our food security and economic future. However, human activities on the planet are significantly affecting our ocean and can bring about disastrous consequences for our food security and sustainable development.

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in our zone remains of great concern, as that abhorrent practice continues with its sophistication and multinational criminal operations. We do maintain high expectations that through the support of the

international community we can combat that illegal activity, which threatens the sustainability of our fish stocks and deprives our people of potential economic benefits.

To reverse already discernable trends towards the disappearance of key tuna species that were once thought inexhaustible, early this year the leaders of the Pacific countries that are parties to the Nauru Agreement signed the Koror Declaration, agreeing to introduce further conservation measures to protect key tuna stocks. One of the measures agreed to is to close off additional high-seas areas to purse seine fishing by vessels licensed to fish our Nauru Agreement waters.

Micronesia is fully committed and will work with its fellow parties to the Nauru Agreement and the wider international community to ensure the sustainability of our tuna resources. We will hold violators accountable through internationally agreed mechanisms to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in our waters and the Western and Central Pacific Ocean region.

Our oceans and our exclusive economic zones are getting a great deal of international attention because of the potential for economic exploitation. We assign the highest priority to greater economic participation in all aspects of that exploitation. Increased economic participation is a major goal for all countries in the Pacific having considerable marine resources — not just Micronesia.

However, our participation in the exploitation of our own marine resources for economic development is held back by a lack of experience and because much of our basic infrastructure still needs to be supported and developed. On the overall scoreboard, the Pacific small island developing States have not claimed their rightful share of their own fisheries resources. International support has to be given to help us build our capacities not only in negotiating agreements and developing our fisheries industries but in realizing a greater share of the benefits from the catch of fish stocks from our own exclusive economic zone.

In this review year for both the Millennium Development Goals and the Mauritius Strategy for Small Island Developing States, we must take full advantage of both occasions and rise to the challenge to meet our world's new and emerging needs.

One of the major preoccupations of the General Assembly over the last 15 years has been the reform of the United Nations. I do not need to belabour the issue, as all present are aware of Micronesia's long-standing position, especially in regard to the reform of the Security Council. For permanent membership, we reiterate our support for Japan and India from our Asia and Pacific region. From other regions, Germany and Brazil also deserve equal consideration. We call for accelerated efforts to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Peace in the Middle East remains elusive, but we have high hopes that the resumption of direct talks recently in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere between the Israelis and the Palestinians will pave the way to a lasting peace and a final settlement with a two-State solution. The whole world has a stake in the Middle East peace process. Micronesia fully supports the peace process and urges all members of this Assembly to play a constructive role and work towards an outcome that brings permanent peace and security to the Middle East. I want to express my profound gratitude to the United States, Egypt, Jordan and the Quartet for their critical roles and leadership in finding a solution to this formidable challenge. For it to be met, we must respond with our collective action and support.

I have been most privileged to have this opportunity to address the Assembly on behalf of my small island country. As I close my statement, I want to reassure this Assembly that Micronesia will continue to do its part as a responsible Member of this Organization.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Alik L. Alik, Vice-President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Sheikh Hasina (Bangladesh) (*spoke in Bangla; English text provided by the delegation*): I warmly congratulate Mr. Deiss on his well-deserved election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. I believe his wise and experienced leadership will bring great success to the Assembly's proceedings. I also congratulate Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his laudable contribution as Assembly President in its sixty-fourth session. I also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless service to the United Nations and to world peace.

Bangladesh is a secular, progressive nation fulfilling the promise of democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law that were made by my father — the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the greatest Bengali of all times — from this podium 36 years ago (see A/PV.2243). That has also been in consonance with the objectives of the United Nations, which remains the last abode where the hopes and aspirations of the hapless people of the world can be fulfilled.

Bangladesh has also been supporting United Nations efforts to establish democracy, human rights, peace and security, as well as taking effective steps to combat terrorism and external threats worldwide. I, too, am committed to ensuring this continuity.

Bangladesh has established an international crimes tribunal to try persons responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including genocide, arson and rape, committed during our war of liberation in 1971 and immediately thereafter. That action is in accord with the rule of law as reflected in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which we have ratified and which is aimed at bringing perpetrators of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity to justice. I believe that only justice can heal the unforgivable, deadly wrongs of the past.

Here, I sadly recall the evil act of terror on 15 August 1975 that took the life of my father and the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and 18 members of my family, including my mother, sisters-in-law and my three brothers, one of whom was only 10 years old. Even I have been a target of a series of assassination attempts ever since my return home from exile in 1981.

The most horrendous period was when our secular democratic party, the Awami League, was in opposition, from 2001 to 2006. At that time thousands of our party workers, supporters and followers of the religious minority who voted for our secular party were mercilessly killed in systematic terrorist acts of the BNP/Jamaat-e-Islami alliance Government. The most audacious act was the dastardly open grenade attack on 21 August 2004 directed against me at a public rally being held to protest those terrorist attacks and killings. By the time a dozen grenades had taken their toll, 24 innocent people, including our party's Secretary for Women's Affairs, Mrs. Ivy Rahman — the wife of our current President — lay dead, and over 500 people were seriously injured.

There have also been attempts on members of my family, but never have we bowed before the forces of terror. As victims of repeated terrorist attacks, my family and I know this menace well. Clearly, our rejection of terrorism is total, as is our determination to eliminate it in all its forms. I want to unequivocally state that terrorism will not be allowed on the soil of Bangladesh, and that is precisely why we are a party to all terrorism-related United Nations conventions and accord them our full support.

Our firm policy against terrorism and our love for peace led me to negotiate the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, thus ending decades of internal conflict, and a peaceful resolution of the violent uprising of our paramilitary border forces in 2009. In the international sphere, our commitment to peace, which is essential for development, is reflected in our unflinching support for United Nations peacekeeping missions. Since 1988 Bangladesh has sent 97,000 troops to 24 countries as part of 32 such missions. In that period we have lost the precious lives of 92 valiant soldiers.

Our present troop contribution has made Bangladesh number one among countries contributing troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Sadly, despite that involvement, our presence in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)

remains negligible, as is our voice in planning strategies of peacekeeping missions. In all fairness, we should have proportionate representation in DPKO.

Bangladesh has been adversely affected by global warming, food insecurity, population displacement and diminished biodiversity, among other problems, and is faced with serious threats caused by climate change and global warming. Although our share of carbon gas emissions is negligible, we are their worst victim. The increasing frequency and ferocity of floods, cyclones, droughts and other natural disasters caused by that phenomenon continue to create havoc through the lives lost and the resources destroyed.

Consequently, attaining the Millennium Development Goals is becoming a more difficult challenge. Climate migrants are already overcrowding our cities, putting great stress on our limited infrastructure facilities and causing social disorder. The situation could become catastrophic with a one-metre rise in the sea level due to global warming. That would inundate one quarter of Bangladesh, impacting 11 per cent of our population and leading to mass migration.

To meet those challenges, we have adopted a 134-point adaptation and mitigation action plan. Those points include dredging major rivers to restrict flooding, recovering cultivable lands for settling displaced people and increasing capacity to produce more grain foods. Other plans include afforesting 20 per cent of the land area by 2015, creating a huge carbon sink; protecting biodiversity; strengthening coasts and river banks with green belts; modernizing disaster management with community participation; developing crop varieties attuned to climate change; changing agricultural practices; using clean coal technology; and adopting nuclear power and renewable energy. Meanwhile, over 14,000 shelters for cyclone victims have been strategically located to cope with cyclonic disasters.

Implementing the action plan requires enormous funds. An immediate measure has been the establishment of a Climate Change Trust Fund with our own resources, and a Climate Change Resilience Fund with assistance from development partners. At the international level, at the fifteenth Climate Change Conference of Parties — COP 15 — last year, we worked hard for a legally binding agreement and for an international climate fund to assist countries most vulnerable to climate change. The compromise was the Copenhagen Accord, which has so far failed to deliver its promises.

Therefore, I urge the world leaders at the sixteenth Conference — COP 16 — this year to conclude, in their wisdom, a positive agreement based on the Bali Plan of Action, with agreed cuts in greenhouse gas emissions and real contributions to the international climate fund. I also urge them to adopt, at COP 16, measures to ameliorate the adverse impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable countries, like Bangladesh, small island developing States like the Maldives, and landlocked countries like Bhutan and Nepal, among other least developed countries (LDCs).

The world is yet to recover from the world economic crisis, and LDCs as well as developed countries are suffering from reduced exports. Those crises are due to inequity and injustice resulting from an unfair international structure, which remains mostly unchanged. The Bretton Woods institutions must now accommodate a greater presence of developing countries, especially least developed countries. While the Bretton Woods institutions can deal with long-term development assistance, Bangladesh proposes the establishment of a special fund under United Nations auspices to deal exclusively with Special Drawing Rights and grants. We also propose that all stakeholders respect country-led ownership of all development projects, as enshrined in the Accra Agenda for Action.

The least developed countries surely welcome the development assistance they receive from developed countries. They would, however, benefit more through receiving liberal trade concessions such as duty and quota-free market access, trade capacity-building, et cetera. Least developed countries also seek a speedy end to the World Trade Organization's Doha Round of the World Trade Organization trade negotiations and fulfilment of the commitments by the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to provide 0.7 per cent of gross national income to official development assistance, of which 0.2 per cent will be directed at least developed countries, as affirmed in the Brussels Programme of Action.

The least developed countries have also been affected by unemployment at home and by obstacles to migration for jobs abroad. Since remittances form a significant part of their gross domestic product,

economic recovery measures should assure employment opportunities and all rights of migrant workers, especially those from least developed countries.

However, amid the travails of the past years, Bangladesh has fared reasonably well in maintaining an annual GDP growth rate of 6 per cent. That was possible due to our pragmatic policies on food production, agriculture, rural development, inflation control and keeping food and essentials prices within reach of the poor. During our previous Government, from 1996 to 2001, our policies on food security made Bangladesh self-sufficient in food, which led to our winning the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Ceres Award. This time around, with the implementation of the national food policy, aimed at stable prices of fuel, fertilizer, seeds and other farm inputs, our Government has succeeded again in ensuring sustained food supply to all.

Our Government's aim is also to use information and communications technology (ICT) to accelerate our socio-economic development. Therefore, we are implementing ICT Act 2009 and ICT Policy 2009 to build the requisite infrastructure and extend ICT to every nook and corner of Bangladesh. Already, educational institutions, local government institutions and rural communities are being connected to Internet services. The process includes an e-centre for rural communities, connecting 8,500 post offices; a high-tech park; a network of e governance; and efforts to strengthen the telecommunication network and satellite communication.

Our e-services are now focused on improving agricultural information delivery, market access, education, health care, early warning systems for disasters, law and order, and social safety net payments. Also being implemented is an aggressive e-leadership programme among members of Parliament, top policymakers, field administrators and local administrators. We had already transformed 100 Union Parishads to host e-centres in 2009, and we are now expediting the process to cover all 4,500 Union Parishads by the end of this year. In short, our Government is determined to achieve a digital Bangladesh and transform it into a middle-income country by 2021, the golden jubilee year of our nation's independence.

Simultaneously, our Government's aim is to attain 100 per cent primary school enrolment by 2011 and 100 per cent literacy rate by 2014. Our highest budget allocation goes to education. Tuition and books are now free for students up to grade 12. Computer and Internet facilities are being provided free of charge to schools in order to familiarize students with their use. To encourage school attendance, we have started providing lunch to students and cash incentives to parents.

Though Bangladesh has achieved the Millennium Development Goal target of gender equality at the secondary level, our plan is to provide free tuition to girls up to the undergraduate level. This is because we firmly believe that women's equal involvement is vital for a nation's development. Gender equity and human development are our top priority concerns.

Our Government has revived the national women's development policy, adopted during our last tenure of office, that is, 1996 to 2001. At present, besides the Prime Minister, the leader of the opposition, the deputy leader and a whip, there are five other women Cabinet ministers and 45 members of Parliament in reserved seats. Moreover, 19 women members of Parliament have been directly elected. Women also occupy 30 per cent of reserved seats in all local governments. They are encouraged to participate in politics and administration, and are recruited in all professions, including the armed services. They are also serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We have made arrangements to provide pensions to distressed and widowed women, as well as residential accommodation for both men and women in old peoples' homes. Our social safety nets also include programmes for minorities, the marginalized, the disabled and the mentally challenged; ashrayan, or homes for the homeless; the "one home, one farm" policy to alleviate poverty; and cash and food transfer programmes.

A new policy provides for the employment of one member from every poor family. Another new initiative is the national services policy for providing youth and women with employment and skills development. Moreover, research opportunities have led to new discoveries, particularly with respect to climate-change-resilient crops. A recent success is genome sequencing of the jute fibre, ensuring improved quality

of jute products, a biodegradable option to hazardous synthetic products.

Health is another area receiving special attention, with the implementation of the national health policy adopted during our previous term of office. This policy provides for the establishment of one community clinic for every 6,000 people. Our plan is to locate 18,000 such clinics in the first phase, to extend basic health services into people's homes. For safe motherhood, a national strategy for maternal health has been adopted, with a programme to reduce the infant mortality rate to 15 from the current 54 per 1,000 live births.

Our target is to complete 100 per cent immunization by the end of our present tenure of Government. Since my Government assumed office, the maternal mortality rate has been reduced from 2.9 to 2.6 and infant mortality to such a significant extent that our successes have been recognized with an award by the United Nations.

Indeed, despite the recent world food, energy, economic and climate change crises, Bangladesh, with the support of United Nations agencies and bilateral and multilateral partners, has made satisfactory progress. In fact, our achievement with respect to MDG 1, on poverty alleviation, MDG 2, on universal primary education, and MDG 3, on gender equality and women's empowerment, are encouraging and on track. Our Government, through its sincere efforts, intends to raise 12 million people out of poverty, which would halve the number of people now living in that sad state by the MDG deadline of 2015.

Our unflinching commitment to peace finds expression in our annual flagship Assembly resolution on the culture of peace (see resolution 64/80). Recent years have shown an extraordinary record of sponsorships because of the reference to the International Mother Language Day. Ever since the Day was adopted by UNESCO in recognition of the language martyrs who gave their lives in 1952 for Bangla, their mother tongue, it has been celebrated throughout the world with growing fervour every year. Since Bangla is spoken by nearly 300 million people worldwide and has a rich heritage in literature, history and other fields, our Parliament adopted a resolution requesting the United Nations to declare Bangla as one of its official languages. I fervently appeal to Member States for acceptance of our very legitimate request.

Every passing day, the peoples of the world are being drawn closer together, as one village, with quickly developing technologies and new challenges such as climate change, terrorism and economic interdependence. Indeed, our destiny is now one, as are our burdens and responsibilities. It is now obvious that only by mobilizing and optimizing our synergies will it be possible for us to create a world of shared peace and prosperity. We have no alternative but to discard our self-centred, short-sighted interests and work in unison for a world that our children, and theirs, will inherit, so that they will remember us with fondness and in gratitude.

May Bangladesh live forever. Long live the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the statement she has just made.

Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Franco Frattini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy.

Mr. Frattini (Italy): Italy is about to celebrate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its unification. We are a young country, but a people with deep roots and ancient traditions. By our history, geographic location and age-old international outlook, we are proud of our illustrious legacy. By necessity and vocation, we are dedicated to dialogue, respect for diversity and mutual understanding.

There is no alternative to this inclusive approach, even when it requires compromises or concessions. I prefer to call it idealistic pragmatism, since our ultimate goal is to spread peace, freedom and prosperity, an ambition that is best achieved through cooperation. This propensity for dialogue is one of Italy's greatest contributions to the United Nations.

Italy is a strong supporter of the central role of the United Nations in global governance and in the management of international crises. By virtue of its universality and impartiality, the Organization has the legitimacy to intervene in crisis situations. Italy participates in peacekeeping missions not only by contributing large numbers of highly qualified troops,

but also by drafting strategic plans and protocol, and by providing training and logistic support. We are the sixth largest contributor to the United Nations regular and peacekeeping operations budgets and, since 2006, the top troop contributor to the United Nations among the members of the European Union (EU) and Group of Western European and Other States.

Approximately 8,000 Italian troops are assigned to operations under the aegis or the mandate of the United Nations. Our presence is spread across 22 missions throughout the world: from Lebanon to Haiti, the Balkans to Afghanistan. Through its experiences in these difficult areas, Italy has learned important lessons. In particular, our comprehensive approach provides valuable insight into how to integrate the military aspects of a mission with the commitment to economic, institutional and civil reconstruction.

We are convinced that, to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, the United Nations system must be strengthened, starting with its capacity to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations must be empowered to fulfil its role as a "producer" of security and stability, a role designed to foster reconciliation, strengthen democracy and, ultimately, help to create a more stable world.

This is why we support the Secretary-General's New Horizon and Global Field Support Strategy initiatives. We must also continue to foster synergies between the United Nations and regional organizations that play a key role in bringing peace to crisis areas. I refer to the African Union and, above all, to the European Union. The Treaty of Lisbon includes new arrangements for the EU's international representation. Once the resolution on EU participation in the work of the United Nations has finally been approved, I sincerely hope the European Union will be able to make a greater contribution to General Assembly responsibilities and to enhance the Assembly's capacity for providing political guidance.

In the field of security, a commitment to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has always been a feature of Italian foreign policy. Proliferation is a growing threat that can only be countered through international cooperation and, in this regard, the Italian Government has just put forth some concrete proposals. We need to set the goal of a zero-nuclear option in an appropriate time frame, but without conveying the impression that it is an unrealistic aspiration.

The year 2010 is a key date on the road to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In this endeavour, our collective responsibility and credibility are at stake. Italy is a strong proponent of a holistic approach to development. For the sake of true democratic ownership, the donor community, in collaboration with the private sector and civil society, must work in a partnership that makes the beneficiary countries the protagonists of development.

The time has come for the international community and the United Nations to increase their commitment to two regional crises. Somalia is the most serious and urgent situation on the African continent today. In the past two years, the Italian Government has contributed considerable financing to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali security forces, but this is not enough. International support for AMISOM must be stepped up.

The second crisis is in Pakistan, where the recent floods have devastated the lives of 20 million people. The Italian Government is disbursing an additional aid package of €80 million to bring relief to the Pakistani population.

But in addition to providing aid, we need to act wisely. This is why Italy has called for new trade measures to increase market access for Pakistani goods and bolster Pakistan's economic recovery. A natural disaster of this magnitude also demonstrates the urgent need to address the effects of climate change through collective and shared measures.

Globalization has generated a new demand for belonging and identity. But a fruitful dialogue among cultures cannot take place without universal values. It is imperative to defend the universal validity of fundamental rights and avoid the risks of relativism. Given the strength of its humanistic heritage that affirms the human being as the measure of all things, Italy is well-equipped to play an important part in this dialectic.

True to this heritage, the Italian Government has promoted a campaign for a moratorium on the death penalty. We welcome the strengthening international trend towards achieving this objective, and hope it will be confirmed when Italy and a broad alliance of

countries present a resolution on the moratorium in the upcoming months.

Religious tolerance is a prerequisite for peace and a founding principle of our civilization. The right to search for truth through the word of God is the freedom of freedoms, but in some areas of the world people are afraid to freely and openly profess their faith because they face persecution by extremists. Italy is strongly committed to protecting freedom of religion and will always oppose discrimination against religious minorities. In fact, Italy together with its EU partners is actively involved in the preparation and presentation of the annual resolution on religious intolerance.

Another target of our fight against discrimination is the international initiative to ban female genital mutilation. Since September 2009, Italy, together with a group of African countries, has promoted such an initiative, which, hopefully, will lead to the presentation here in the Assembly of a resolution that fully respects African ownership.

Female genital mutilations, which violate a woman's physical integrity, affect millions of women and girls throughout the world, including in my country, where 35,000 such cases have been reported. Women's rights and national progress go hand in hand, but, nevertheless, women are still suffering in many countries throughout the world.

By pooling together our efforts we can ensure the necessary consensus for resolutions that safeguard our own and future generations from prejudice and intolerance. In this spirit, we very warmly welcome the creation of UN Women within the Secretariat and hope that it quickly becomes operative.

Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance requires a constant commitment to the comprehensive reform of the Organization. Such reform should affect the Secretariat, the various funds, agencies and programmes of the United Nations and, obviously, its decision-making bodies.

In regard to reform of the Security Council, we seek realistic compromise solutions that garner the broadest possible consensus and ensure an adequate representation of African, Arab and other underrepresented groups of countries. More than 15 years of negotiations have demonstrated that the membership is profoundly divided. It is now time to search for genuine and far-reaching compromise. Italy and its Uniting for Consensus partners are ready to participate constructively in the reform process and have already demonstrated their flexibility. We look forward to engaging with the rest of the membership during the current session of the General Assembly.

The process of revitalizing the General Assembly should strive to restore its central role. The Assembly's universal character gives it potential for providing political guidance that should be realized. The Assembly is the place where we could jointly identify the main problems that threaten the security, stability and development of all Member States and draft common strategies to address them effectively.

In conclusion, the vision for the future to which my country, Italy, aspires — a future of peaceful coexistence and mutual enrichment between values and cultures — can only be ensured through the successful completion of the many reform processes under way. We can achieve this future if we build our actions on dialogue and mutual understanding. And when we do achieve peaceful coexistence and mutual enrichment, the United Nations system will be equipped with the tools it needs to fulfil the main principles and values of the Charter. One of these stands above all the others in importance: each and every individual throughout the world is endowed with inalienable and absolute rights concerning which no kind of compromise can ever be tolerated.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain.

Mr. Moratinos Cuyaubé (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): May my first words be to congratulate the newly appointed President of the Assembly, Mr. Joseph Deiss, to whom I wish great success in his conduct of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

September is an important month in the agenda of international politics since the middle of the last century because it marks the beginning of the new session of the United Nations General Assembly, which has the city of New York as its backdrop.

Far removed is the San Francisco Conference, which turned the page on global conflicts and opened the way for international cooperation by establishing a new Organization, the United Nations, an Organization geared towards promoting peace, justice and a better

life for all humankind. Far removed, as well, are the times of the Bretton Woods Agreements, which established free trade rules for commercial and financial relations among the most industrialized nations of the world in order to achieve peace.

In the first decade of this century we witnessed events that have shaped the future of international relations and caused a new world to emerge, as we saw in New York in the month of September. On 11 September 2001, the cities of New York and Washington suffered terrorist attacks that stunned the world and were among the most traumatic in the history of the West. In September 2008, New York was the centre and focus of a panic created by the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, while just a few weeks ago, our host city experienced tensions related to intercultural coexistence and saw the relaunching of the most ambitious programme of international cooperation in history, the Millennium Development Goals.

These events mark the true beginning of the twenty-first century, which is unfolding in an environment of accelerated global and interdependent transformation. We are at a historic crossroads where we must promote awareness of the reform of the United Nations system and the establishment of new mechanisms for global governance that modernize the system of international relations, consolidate multilateralism and security, and strengthen global economic recovery, while providing accountable management of growing interculturalism.

Effective multilateralism is the method that will enable us to tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century. It is a method that stems from the efforts of the General Assembly and from the commitment and work of the leaders of the States represented here. It is a method based on respect and understanding in order to build new alliances and common strategies and policies.

On many occasions, we hear speeches that emphasize the incapacities and weaknesses of the United Nations system. But I prefer not to preach classic doom and gloom here; rather, I would acknowledge the work and success of the United Nations as well as its capacity to respond, as seen in its response to the natural disasters suffered by Haiti and Pakistan. The capacity to take action and effectively coordinate the efforts of all countries through a multilateral approach is a path that the international system should continue to follow at this time of great challenges before us.

On 11 September, the concept of security was transformed and expanded. In September 2006, the Member States approved the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, a resolution and annexed Plan of Action (resolution 60/288) which presumed for the first time to define a common strategic approach agreed by all States Members of the United Nations. This strategy was presented by Secretary-General Kofi Annan one year after the brutal and traumatic attacks of 11 March 2004 in Madrid. Since that time, the intensity and number of terrorist attacks have decreased, and we have improved security, although we are far from having won the war against international terrorism.

This year we have also seen very significant advances in the area of security, disarmament and nuclear non proliferation. The new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty makes it possible to reduce by 30 per cent of the nuclear warheads in the United States and Russia and represents the greatest nuclear agreement in 20 years. Last May, 189 countries signatories of the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons approved the convening of a conference in 2012 to transform the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

We are beginning to come out of the worst financial and economic crisis since the 1930s. The negative fallout of this crisis will be felt through time by millions of people, especially in terms of decent employment. Since the collapse of Lehman Brothers on 15 September 2008, the international financial system has required States and international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to intervene at an unprecedented level in order to maintain worldwide demand and financial markets.

The lack of international regulation helped to bring about the crisis of the financial entities and has required strengthened coordination, making the Group of 20 a new forum for economic governance. The lesson of the crisis is that, for their development, international markets need not only the invisible hand, but also a global regulatory system. That is what we have understood in Europe, where we have adopted measures to harmonize the legislation of member States, so that regulatory authorities would be able to

exercise both executive and disciplinary powers. Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, Europe is now on a path to cohesiveness in the area of foreign policy and should be seen as a single interlocutor with its own voice in the international community. It should therefore enjoy an appropriate status in the General Assembly.

My Government, the Government of Spain, is in the vanguard of the fight against hunger and poverty. It has proposed in the United Nations, together with other Member States, the creation of a tax on international currency transactions whose proceeds would be used for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. While the Food and Agriculture Organization has provided us with encouraging data — we have seen hunger decrease in the world for the first time — the figure of 925 million hungry people in the world is morally and politically unacceptable.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon knows that he can count on Spain for the mobilization of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed, fighting poverty cannot be a casualty of the economic recession because, despite the crisis, it is not material conditions but political will that will be the key to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The time has come to take responsibility for combating climate change. To face this challenge, we need to change the way in which we perceive development and economic growth. A greater effort is required to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependency on fossil fuels, and to commit to renewable energy and efficient and responsible consumption. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has created a point of reference to provide us with a regime that defines realistic solutions and responds to our concerns and priorities.

In a few months, we will attend the Climate Change Conference and should be aware of the effort necessary to pave the way to the meeting in Cancún, where the very credibility of the multilateral system will be at stake. The Conference will be successful if we take a realistic approach demonstrating solidarity and generosity towards the most vulnerable States. It should lead us to an ambitious agreement by which States represented in the General Assembly can take ownership of the objectives and verifiable commitments contained therein.

To bring these objectives to fruition, we need the equitable integration of almost half the world's population — women. The tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, should provide us with an opportunity to enhance gender equality in the public arena, in institutions and in the economic, social and cultural spheres. We can and should move ahead with these reforms because there are positive indications that this mandate is dynamic, such as the recent creation of UN Women, led by former President of Chile Michelle Bachelet, whom I congratulate on her appointment as Director of the new entity.

With regard to human rights, Spain is firmly committed to abolishing the death penalty and introduced an initiative to the General Assembly two years ago to that end. The International Commission against the Death Penalty, proposed by Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, will soon be established and begin its work. We believe that capital punishment is an absolute violation of human rights due to its irreversibility, which also makes it the most extreme case of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

My country unequivocally supports peaceful and negotiated solutions to all international conflicts, in accordance with United Nations resolutions. Achieving peace in the Middle East remains a strategic priority for Spain. That is why, on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the Madrid Conference, we continue to work resolutely to ensure that the process of direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians will finally lead to the two-State solution. The Israeli and Palestinian peoples know they can count on all our support at this time, when various thorny issues related to the conflict are being addressed.

In this regard, I add my voice to the appeal made from this very rostrum by the President of the United States for the moratorium on building in the settlements to be maintained. In order to achieve a lasting, fair and comprehensive peace, it is vital to resolve the issues that relate to Syria and Lebanon and to work within a multilateral framework that creates a genuine global coalition for peace in the Middle East.

We all know that stability in the Western Balkans and the full integration of its countries into the

European Union is a basic priority for Europe. In 2010, we commemorated the tenth anniversary of the Zagreb Conference. Spain, which held the European Union presidency at the time, convened a high-level meeting in Sarajevo in May that was attended by all actors involved and at which the European Union reaffirmed its commitment to the region's stability and European future. Recently, the consensus adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 64/298, sponsored by the 27 members of the European Union and Serbia on one of the region's pending issues showed the willingness of all actors in the international community to achieve the aforementioned objectives.

Spain reiterates its support for the mediation efforts undertaken by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Christopher Ross. The conflict in that territory must be resolved by mutual agreement among the parties and pursuant to the United Nations resolutions calling for the self-determination of the Saharans.

In our view, Ibero-America is undergoing unprecedented social and political change. At the start of the bicentennial commemorations of the independence of these republics, Spain wishes to join the celebrations by attending the Ibero-American summits and by strengthening its bilateral relations and relations between the European Union and Latin America.

Cuba deserves special mention following the recent decisions taken by Cuban authorities. Embargos and unilateral attitudes that only disappoint new expectations are useless and make no sense.

Africa is clearly one of the most important future challenges to the international community and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Progress achieved in the areas of good governance and democratization on the continent are cause for optimism and should allow it, with international cooperation, to overcome the crises in the Sahel, Somalia or the Great Lakes region. Spain reiterates its firm commitment to Africa.

Coexistence in a globalized world should motivate us to strengthen the instruments for good governance and promote cultural and intercultural diversity, which are among the most pressing challenges of the twenty-first century. International consolidation of the Alliance of Civilizations, as a tool of preventive diplomacy, is now a fact and a resource we must use. More than 100 States, along with 23 international organizations, now belong to the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations. I take this opportunity to invite those countries that have not yet joined to do so.

In a landscape of international economic crisis, intercultural tensions run the risk of exacerbation. This should impel us to continue working for the respect and understanding of cultures and civilizations in order to counter expressions of hatred, fanaticism, division and confrontation.

The new world requires us to adapt and enlarge the international institutional architecture. As the Spanish philosopher, José Ortega y Gasset said, "men do not live together just because; they do so for the purpose of great undertakings". Today the United Nations has a great undertaking: to complete the reform of our institutions and lay the foundations for global governance. Together, we can face the challenges and global crises of the twenty-first century and construct an international system that is fairer, more balanced and more sustainable.

Bretton Woods in 1944 and the San Francisco Conference in 1945 were the results of half a century of crises and two world wars. Believe me, we are not doomed to wait another half century to reform and establish new institutions for the twenty-first century. We have already waited a decade, but we cannot continue to wait much longer, because we can feel history breathing down our necks.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Michael Spindelegger, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria.

Mr. Spindelegger (Austria): The tragic earthquake in Haiti, the devastating floods in Pakistan and the financial crisis have reminded us that the global challenges of the twenty-first century require concerted action. The United Nations needs to be at the centre of our activities. It is the forum of today's multilateral system that enjoys the highest degree of legitimacy. Inclusiveness is its key comparative advantage.

However, this moral authority must be matched by mechanisms and resources to ensure its effectiveness. Adherence to the rule of law is fundamental. All multilateral efforts and activities need

to operate on the basis of clear and predictable rules that apply equally to all Member States. Member States, as well as men and women around the globe, must be able to trust in the United Nations capacity to turn the promises of the Charter into reality.

Cooperation with other international actors is indispensable to the United Nations efforts to deal with the complex challenges of today. Austria and the European Union (EU) stand ready as reliable partners for the United Nations in areas ranging from development cooperation and humanitarian aid to the maintenance of international peace and security and to promoting the respect for the rule of law and human rights. In this context, we hope that our initiative to obtain modalities for the EU's participation in the General Assembly, reflecting the changes provided for in the Treaty of Lisbon, will soon be adopted. This would greatly help to reinforce the productive partnership of the United Nations with an organization that is fully committed to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter. Austria is proud to contribute to the work of the United Nations by hosting the United Nations Office at Vienna. We will continue to offer Vienna as a platform for dialogue and cooperation.

In our view, good governance is an inherent element of global governance. The Vienna-based United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is central to the United Nations efforts to combat corruption and organized crime by supporting Member States in implementing international standards, including the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Corruption presents one of the major challenges with dire consequences for the international community's efforts to reduce poverty. The recent founding of the International Anti-Corruption Academy in Austria is an important step towards addressing this challenge. That institution aims to provide a tool for research, education and training for professionals from all fields, including law enforcement officials, judges and prosecutors.

The fight against climate change is one of the central issues of the twenty-first century. Climate change has a far-reaching impact on the economic and social development of the entire international community. We need global consensus now if we want to achieve the goal to limit global warming to 2°C and to reverse the trend of rising greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. Nobody should underestimate the difficulty of this task. However, the fight against climate change is also an opportunity. We have the chance to create a framework for sustainable, qualitative growth at the global level. Austria is committed to contributing to this endeavour.

This week, leaders agreed on concrete actions to get the Millennium Development Goals back on track in the fight against world poverty. We now need to mobilize all our efforts to live up to this renewed commitment, particularly in addressing the special needs of Africa in this regard. The Governments of developing and developed countries, as well as the private sector and civil society, need to work together to achieve our ambitious goals by 2015.

Let me now turn to one of the most urgent threats to peace and security. These days, our attention is focused on the recently initiated direct talks between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas. We welcome the leadership and commitment of President Obama, who made this development possible. These talks offer the first concrete prospects for a sustainable peace in the Middle East in many years. An agreement between Israel and Palestine would not only radically improve the lives of the peoples concerned, but would also provide the key to a more stable region and a more peaceful world. We hope that both sides are aware of their enormous responsibilities.

The process is still fragile. We believe that the extension of the settlement moratorium is fundamental to keeping the talks on track and creating an environment in which the core issues can be tackled successfully. It is equally important that the efforts of the Palestinian authorities to build up functioning institutions for a future Palestinian State move forward dynamically. It is ultimately up to the parties to bring the peace process to a positive conclusion. However, international actors, in particular the members of the Quartet, have an important role to play. As a member of the European Union, Austria is ready to fully play its part.

In order to ensure that the United Nations continues to play a central role in global governance, we must continue with our efforts towards internal reform of the United Nations, including the reform of the Security Council. Both an enlargement of the Security Council that reflects today's political, economic and social realities and a reform of the Council's working methods will enhance the Council's

legitimacy and the acceptance of its decisions. As an elected member of the Security Council, we participate in its work with great commitment and are doing our best to promote effectiveness and transparency.

Significant efforts are under way to ensure and sustain United Nations peacekeeping as an essential tool for achieving the goals of the United Nations. Confronted with limited financial and human resources and the increasing complexity of peacekeeping operations, the United Nations has started a review of the whole United Nations peacekeeping system with a view to adjusting it to the needs of the twenty-first century. It is of vital importance for the Council to effectively monitor and oversee the implementation of peacekeeping mandates, in close cooperation with troop and police contributors, the Secretariat and United Nations missions. Austria fully supports the ongoing peacekeeping reform and stands ready to play its part in a renewed global peacekeeping partnership.

We also have to work on making peace consolidation irreversible. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, together with integrated peacebuilding support offices, has a key role in fostering sustainable peace. If we use the peacebuilding architecture optimally, lasting peace can be achieved with determination and the political will of the country concerned, as well as the support of the international community. Since peacekeeping and peacebuilding must be approached in an integrated manner, we strongly support the enhanced interaction of the Security Council with the Peacebuilding Commission throughout the conflict cycle, as was affirmed at the Security Council summit this week.

Due to the changing nature of conflict and an increase in the activities of non-State actors, the protection of civilians in armed conflict constitutes a core task of a large number of United Nations peacekeeping missions. The effective protection of those affected by hostilities and violence has become a yardstick for the success and credibility of United Nations missions in the field and the United Nations at large. Security Council resolution 1894 (2009), unanimously adopted in November last year, was a major step forward in the Council's efforts to better protect civilians from physical violence, displacement and violations of their rights.

However, resolution 1894 (2009) has not yet had its full impact on the ground. Violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and impunity for such crimes continue to pose a major threat to the rule of law and lasting peace in post-conflict situations.

Austria acknowledges the primary responsibility of States to ensure the protection of civilians, including the credible prosecution of those responsible for war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity or other serious violations of international law. We support the use and promotion of mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court, commissions of inquiry or panels of experts. Such tools should be seen as a viable complement and reinforcement of steps taken at the national level to ensure accountability. The Security Council has a central role in this endeavour. Ensuring the implementation of resolution 1894 (2009) will be one of the key priorities of Austria during the remainder of its term on the Council.

Austria also attaches utmost importance to enhancing the role of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. Even 10 years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, we can still witness major gaps. Women continue to be largely absent from peace processes and conflict-resolution efforts, and crimes against them all too often remain unpunished. The latest, shocking mass rapes in the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo demonstrate more than ever that there is urgent need for action. We cannot afford to ignore those gaps. The occasion of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) will therefore provide a crucial opportunity to work towards more consistent implementation in promoting women's issues in all aspects of international peace efforts. Those efforts are fully supported by our development cooperation.

Austria warmly welcomes the milestone decision of the General Assembly to establish UN Women, which will make the United Nations a stronger and more effective partner in the advancement of women worldwide. We look forward to working with Michelle Bachelet towards our common goals.

Children in armed conflict deserve special protection. I am very satisfied that the United Nations system has made concrete progress in combating serious child rights violations and in fighting the recruitment and enlisting of child soldiers.

Austria reiterates the pivotal role of the United Nations at the centre of our counter-terrorism efforts. Respect for human rights and the rule of law is a fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism. As Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban, Austria is committed to enhancing due process in the Council's sanctions regimes. We therefore welcome the substantial improvements of the listing and de-listing procedures and the recent appointment of Ms. Kimberly Prost as Ombudsperson.

The Austrian candidature for the Human Rights Council for the period 2011-2014 is a logical continuation of our long-term work and engagement in ensuring the respect for human rights, including in the Security Council. Dialogue and partnerships are crucial for turning the promises of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into a reality for all people around the globe. Austria has consistently worked with all actors towards narrowing the gap between standards and their implementation at the national and international levels.

To end on a positive note, this past year saw the most positive developments towards nuclear disarmament in a decade. Security Council resolution 1887 (2009), adopted just a year ago, provided a powerful impetus. Although many issues are still unresolved and require our close attention, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in May produced an outcome that restored confidence in the Treaty. For the first time, a comprehensive action plan dealing with all three pillars of the Treaty was agreed. Let me stress here that Austria is honoured to have contributed to that success. For the first time, a world without nuclear weapons was accepted as the goal of all parties, who pledged to ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons. For the first time, the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons were recognized — an important step towards the eventual legal ban of nuclear weapons by means of a nuclear weapons convention or framework of legal instruments.

Although the results of the Conference are positive, much remains to be done. The action plan needs to be implemented. The nuclear-weapon States — which promised to engage among themselves on a number of vital issues and report by 2014 — must lead by example. The international disarmament structures must be reformed. I am grateful for Secretary-General Ban's initiative in this respect.

Finally, we must learn from successful disarmament initiatives. Let me underline that Austria is delighted that the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force last month. The Convention is a positive example of how committed Governments, international organizations and civil society can work together to achieve real progress. In order to promote interaction in this respect in the nuclear field as well, Austria supports the establishment of a competence centre for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in Vienna early next year. Conceived as a platform for open discussion and independent expertise, monitoring and advocacy, the centre shall facilitate understanding and cooperation among all entities involved. I hope that it will contribute to further progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We, the United Nations, have shared responsibility to move forward jointly in order to reach our common goal of international peace, security and development for all.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa.

Ms. Nkoana-Mashabane (South Africa): My delegation joins previous speakers in expressing our congratulations to Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We want to take this opportunity to assure him of our full cooperation and to wish him a very successful and rewarding term. I also take this opportunity to thank Mr. Ali Treki for the excellent work he did in steering this Assembly during his tenure as President during its sixty-fourth session.

The theme of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly — "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance" — resonates with what our global citizen, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, said about this body on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary:

> "The United Nations has to reassess its role, redefine its profile and reshape its structures. It should truly reflect the diversity of our universe and ensure equity among the nations in the

> exercise of power within the system of international relations, in general, and the Security Council, in particular." (*A/50/PV.37, p. 6*)

My delegation supports the choice of this theme, and we wish to reiterate our belief in the centrality of the United Nations and the system of multilateralism.

Despite the challenges that face humanity in the twenty-first century, the relevance of the United Nations as a multilateral mechanism through which a myriad of complex world affairs can be administered and resolved cannot be overemphasized. Those challenges compel us more than ever before to strengthen the United Nations. South Africa is committed to working with other Member States to achieve the full potential of the United Nations to address the urgent challenges facing the international community by making it more relevant, more responsive to the diversity of humankind and more representative.

The creation of the United Nations was one of the notable successes of the twentieth century, and thanks to its existence the world has been spared another war on the scale and magnitude of the First and Second World Wars. The exponential growth in the membership of the Organization over the years, from 51 Members in 1945 to 192 today, clearly demonstrates the confidence that the peoples of the world have placed in the United Nations and the ideals contained in its Charter.

The universal membership of the United Nations gives it the legitimacy to be at the centre of efforts to address global challenges. However, the question is whether the United Nations has leveraged that diversity of its membership as a source of strength and acted decisively against any tendency that runs contrary to its fundamental values and founding principles.

The answer to this is yes because, in the past, the United Nations played an invaluable role in the worldwide process of decolonization, transforming the political landscape of the world and bringing much-cherished freedom and independence to the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Organization was instrumental in bringing about the demise of the universally despised apartheid system in our own country, South Africa.

When the Organization recognized the right to development as a human right, it gave voice and hope to those who know the face of poverty. When the Organization has sent its troops to far-flung places to keep peace among neighbours who should be living together, it has again underscored the reason for which it was established. Amid all the challenges, the United Nations has been relevant and responsive to our diverse interests.

Five years ago, at the World Summit, we agreed that, if the Organization were to continue to play its central role in global governance effectively, there was a need to strengthen and reposition it to deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century. We believe that the revitalization of the General Assembly remains one of the cornerstones of the United Nations reform agenda. The General Assembly is the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations and plays a critical role in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law. Its decisions are taken by a collective among equals for the common good.

We will support measures that are aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the General Assembly, especially regarding its role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Indeed, we witnessed with satisfaction how, on several occasions, the General Assembly acted promptly when the Security Council was unwilling or unable to respond to grave developments in the aftermath of the conflict in Gaza in 2009.

Indeed, no transformation of the United Nations could be complete without the fundamental reform of the Security Council. South Africa believes that the objective of the reform should be to create a Security Council that is truly representative of the membership and effectively responsive to international crises, as mandated by the Charter of the United Nations. Indeed, it remains a travesty of justice that Africa, which accounts for a large portion of the work of the Council, is not represented in the permanent category. Thus, deliberations about us carry on without us.

The world should be free of weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with our undertakings on total disarmament. In that regard, South Africa welcomes the recently agreed programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament.

While the right to development and freedom from want are central to the work of the United Nations, we have just ended the High-level Plenary Meeting to review our performance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and agreed that more needs to be done to act on commitments already made by the international community in that regard.

The people of Haiti have a story to tell about how best the international community can respond in unison and effectively to a nation in distress.

A speedy and satisfactory conclusion of the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization, which promised so much for the developing South, unfortunately remains a dream yet to be fulfilled. At the same time, the global economic crisis has highlighted the point that many of us have always made about the need to work for an international financial architecture that is sensitive to the development needs of the South.

The contribution of the Group of 20 (G-20) is a welcome development in that regard, and we believe that the Group should complement and reinforce the good work of the United Nations and not act as an alternative. In its composition, the G-20 will also need to mirror the rich diversity of humankind by making sure that all regions of the world, in particular Africa, are well represented. We look forward to the full implementation of the undertakings made to transform the international financial architecture, including the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions, as a step towards building a world system founded on equity and social justice.

Environmental issues, including climate change, have also become high on the priorities of the international agenda. South Africa is fully committed to a multilateral outcome on the basis of the Bali Plan of Action, with a two-track negotiated and legally binding outcome. We are convinced that the Copenhagen Accord provides political guidance for future negotiations.

Accordingly, we should work together to ensure that the forthcoming meeting of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Mexico takes bold and concrete steps to address climate change and its effects. For our part, South Africa will have the opportunity to host the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties in December 2011, on the eve of the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

Peace and stability are one of the preconditions for bringing about an Africa of the new beginning that the Chairperson of the African Union, His Excellency President Wa Mutharika of Malawi, spoke of on the first day of the general debate (see A/65/PV.11). The United Nations has been an important partner to Africa, working with us through the African Union, whether in Somalia, the Sudan or the Democratic Republic of Congo. South Africa is encouraged by the commitment shown by the international community in trying to assist the both the Government of the Sudan and Southern Sudan as they prepare for the upcoming referendum in January 2011.

The people of Zimbabwe also need the helping hand of the international community in implementing their Global Political Agreement. The African Union and the Southern African Development Community speak for us, too, in calling for the lifting of sanctions against Zimbabwe. We will continue to work with the peoples of Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Burundi, among others, in their efforts to build and consolidate peace and democracy in their respective countries.

In the case of Western Sahara, South Africa remains concerned about the continuing impasse, which stands in the way of a solution that will result in the people of Western Sahara exercising their inalienable right to self-determination. We count on the United Nations, especially the Security Council, to continue to make decisions that enable us to decisively deal with the challenges of peace and security on our continent.

The United Nations should see Africa as a partner in the maintenance of international peace and the management of conflicts, and accordingly do more to strengthen the working relationship between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. In this respect, South Africa will continue to support all international efforts to help the people of Palestine and Israel in their endeavour to find lasting peace, leading to the establishment of a viable Palestinian State, on the basis of the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, existing side by side in peace and security with Israel.

We are at one with the call made by several delegations for the lifting of the embargo on the Republic of Cuba.

We have converged here year after year to make strong statements on Palestine, the embargo on Cuba and the independence of the Western Sahara. The ultimate test of the relevance of the United Nations will therefore be in bringing closure to all these long outstanding issues in a manner that is consistent with our decisions and the collective will of nations represented in this Organization.

The President returned to the Chair.

In conclusion, we were also privileged recently to be the stage, and Africa the theatre, of the 2010 Fédération internationale de football association World Cup tournament. Our people spoke for us during that soccer event in how they embraced each other and in their diversity of many nations, consistent with the spirit of ubuntu, which simply means "I am because you are". They gave us hope and confirmed the faith we have in our belief that a better world is possible. The role of sport in development and in advancing peace can never be underestimated. As States, we can best respond to this message from our people by making sure that the United Nations, in playing its role in the global system, is more relevant, more inclusive and more representative.

Looking ahead, South Africa is honoured to have been endorsed by the African Union as a candidate for the Security Council non-permanent membership for the period 2011-2012. We stand ready to continue to contribute to the achievement of peace and security in the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Edward Nalbandyan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.

Mr. Nalbandyan (Armenia) (*spoke in French*): Each year, the great family of nations comes together to assess what the Organization has achieved and to consider together ways to respond to the problems facing the world and to acknowledge what unites our nations and what still divides them.

For 65 years, the General Assembly has carried out this both difficult and noble mission. That mission was summarized very well by the first speaker at the first session of the General Assembly, on 10 January 1946, as the maintenance of peace and security and the establishment, through cooperation, of those conditions of stability and well-being which will ensure peaceful and friendly relations, based on the principle of equal rights and self-determination among the nations of the world.

Since then, the General Assembly has changed. The number of Members has almost quadrupled, major decisions have been made, historic documents have been adopted, old problems have given way to new, and the scope of responsibilities of the General Assembly has greatly increased as it has opened itself to new challenges in international security, non-proliferation, disarmament, respect for human rights, poverty, terrorism, global warming, the financial crisis and many other issues.

In short, many things have changed, including the century.

Nevertheless and despite the developments that have marked recent decades, the situation in the region where Armenia is situated prompts me to return to that day, 10 January 1946, which is so distant yet so close, given the objectives that were put forward then and which continue more than ever to underpin our actions.

How is it possible to maintain peace, security and stability when we keep raising defence spending and regularly threaten to use force and to start wars? How can we promote friendly and peaceful relations between peoples when we promote intolerance and hatred and impose blockades and closed borders? How can we assure the principle of the equal rights of peoples and their right to make their own decisions when we reject the fundamental principle of international law — the right of peoples to self-determination?

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to hereby touch upon the conflict between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh exercised their right to self-determination two decades ago. They fought for their right to freedom, withstanding the brutal war unleashed by Azerbaijan, which had suppressed them for 70 years and attempted to cleanse them from their ancestral home. For that purpose, it even resorted to the use of mercenaries closely linked to international terrorist organizations. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh had to pursue their right to self-determination as they were being denied their right to existence.

The right of peoples to self-determination is a fundamental and indispensable right enshrined in the

Charter of the United Nations. The advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in July reaffirmed the wisdom of the founders of this Organization, who made sure that one of the fundamental principles for maintaining peace and stability in the world — the right of peoples to self-determination — could not be underrated in any way compared with the other principles of international law.

Let us be realistic. One cannot say each and every time that this is the last self-determination case. No one is able to stop the progress of history; otherwise, there would not be 192 Member States in this Organization instead of 51, as there were at the time of its founding.

The Nagorno-Karabakh peace process moves forward with the internationally mandated mediation of the Co-Chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, who continue their persistent efforts aimed at the peaceful settlement of the conflict based on the fundamental principles of international law: the non-use of force or threat of force, the equal rights and self-determination of peoples and territorial integrity.

On 17 July, at the margins of the OSCE informal ministerial meeting in Almaty, the Minsk Group Co-Chairs issued a statement in which they reiterated that the proposed principles and elements have been conceived as an integrated whole and that any attempt to select some of them over others would make it impossible to achieve a balanced solution. Armenia fully shares this vision and will continue the negotiations on that basis in search of a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Unfortunately, Azerbaijan rejects two of the three principles mentioned and is attempting not only to turn upside down the essence of the negotiation process, but also to distort the nature of the conflict in various international forums, including the General Assembly, as happened here about two weeks ago and again two days ago. That country is attempting to mislead the international community, presenting the consequences of the conflict as its causes.

Azerbaijan's unabated war rhetoric, growing violations of the ceasefire regime, and unprecedented military budget increases only exacerbate the situation, raising concerns about the already fragile stability in the region. Azerbaijan continues to reject proposals to come to an agreement on the non-use of force or threat of force, as well as calls for the consolidation of the ceasefire. Azerbaijan's attitude thus represents a threat to regional peace and security. The money it derives from oil revenues is being directed at funding new military ventures. We all know the potential results of such adventurism.

Azerbaijan should refrain from its continuing attempts to remove the settlement process from the Minsk Group format and framework and from making provocative and bellicose statements and actions, in order that the negotiation process may proceed more constructively and effectively.

In an era when the protection and promotion of human rights are considered essential in the civilized world, intolerance for the values of others and acts that intentionally, consistently and repeatedly damage or destroy the cultural or religious heritage of other civilizations must be condemned with the same resolve and determination as violence against people.

The destruction by Azerbaijanis between 1998 and 2005 in Nakhichevan of thousands of cross-stones delicately carved by Armenian masters in the ninth to the sixteenth centuries is a vivid example of such a crime. Under the Azerbaijani Government's watchful eye, thousands of these gigantic medieval sculptures were bulldozed and the area turned into a military zone in a Government-sanctioned operation. A resolution at the sixteenth General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites stated regretfully with regard to this act of vandalism: "... this heritage that once enjoyed its worthy place among the treasures of the world's heritage can no longer be transmitted today to future generations".

Armenia's initiative for the normalization of relations with Turkey without any preconditions was fully supported by the international community. Last year, after intensive negotiations, we achieved agreement and finally signed the Armenian-Turkish protocols. We made a confident investment in a durable rapprochement, while Turkey, unfortunately, backtracked from its commitments and not only refrained from ratifying the signed protocols, but returned to its initial language of preconditions. Consequently, the Armenian-Turkish border continues to remain the only closed border in Europe. Good intentions must be proved in deeds, not just words. Armenia is ready to move forward when Turkey will

once again be prepared to normalize relations without preconditions.

While we are discussing all possible ways to create a more prosperous and safer world for our peoples, we would be remiss if we did not speak about the responsibility to protect. As a nation we survived the most heinous crime against humanity, genocide, 95 years ago. We attach the utmost importance to furthering all international efforts aimed at the prevention of genocide and crimes against humanity. It is encouraging that further discussions of the Secretary-General's report on early warning, assessment and the responsibility to protect (A/64/864) are being held in the General Assembly. This will enable us come up with a formula that will allow us to act in a timely and coherent manner, utilizing all the United Nations system resources and capabilities for early warning, assessment and prevention of situations that could lead to genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity.

To bolster United Nations capacity to deal with current challenges and those ahead, we need to increase our efforts to further the process of United Nations reform, making more efficient and effective use of existing resources, making the "One United Nations" policy work, and better utilizing regional capacities to complement our global actions.

Today, the world is evolving faster than ever. To meet security, political, economic, social, environmental and other challenges we simply have to put our efforts, resources, and political determination together to deal with them and move the international development agenda forward.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Shin Kak-soo, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Shin Kak-soo (Republic of Korea): I would like to begin by extending my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I have every confidence that under your distinguished leadership this session will indeed yield fruitful results. May I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki moon. We deeply appreciate his wholehearted commitment and selfless dedication to the noble and lofty goals of this august Organization.

Since their launch in 2000, we have made headway towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Yet progress varies greatly across regions and countries and is uneven in terms of targets. Among other things, maternal and child health warrants our special attention as the most off-track goal in most regions. Indeed, improving maternal and child health is the best investment we can make to carry momentum over to all other closely related goals. In view of the importance it attaches to this goal, the Republic of Korea has joined the Group of 8 Muskoka Initiative for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. Furthermore, Korea fully supports the Secretary-General's pursuit of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, and it welcomes the enthusiasm of all stakeholders for this important initiative, as was demonstrated at this week's meeting.

With only five years remaining until 2015, the prospects for meeting the MDGs are not altogether encouraging. It is high time for the international community to renew its resolve and galvanize global efforts to achieve these vast and meaningful goals. I earnestly hope that, when we gather again in 2013 to review progress, we will find that implementation of the commitments at the High-level Meeting held earlier this week exceeds our most optimistic expectations.

We must bear in mind that the success of the MDGs hinges on honouring development commitments and redoubling efforts to strengthen global partnership. In full recognition of this, the Republic of Korea has embarked on a midterm plan to triple its official development assistance (ODA) budget over the next five years to 0.25 per cent of gross national income, despite tight financial constraints.

As a new Member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee, Korea is seeking to improve the quality of its development assistance by undertaking far-reaching reforms in its ODA system. Last year, basic laws on ODA were enacted as the first step forward. Korea will also align its development policy to reflect the actual needs of the recipient countries and encourage their taking ownership. With its unique experience of fast economic and social development, Korea will do its utmost to play a bridging role between the donor and recipient countries.

Next year, Korea will host the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan. The Korean

Government will make every possible effort to ensure that this forum serves to map out a new direction for international development cooperation that can address evolving global needs.

It is indeed our common belief that development cooperation is an investment for all. A sustainable and balanced world economy requires us to narrow down the persistent development gap. This is the shared goal of the Group of 20 (G-20) and the United Nations. The G-20 leaders have agreed to place development as a crucial new item on the agenda for the upcoming G-20 summit in Seoul this November. The G-20 development agenda will concentrate on building capacity to promote economic growth in the developing world. In this way, the Group of 20 is expected to complement the ongoing development agenda, including the MDGs.

Global financial safety nets will be another new agenda item at the Seoul summit. Robust and reliable global financial safety nets are vital, especially for developing countries, which are most vulnerable to volatile global capital flows. The Seoul summit will focus on faithful implementation of the previous agreements, which will help to bring back the stability of the global market at an early date. Leaders will continue to coordinate their policies for a strong, sustainable and balanced growth of the world economy. Reforms of international financial institutions and financial regulations will also be central to the discussion at the G-20 summit.

As the G-20 President this year, Korea is committed to ensuring a successful outcome for the summit, one that will contribute to overcoming the current crisis and to working out the post-crisis management of the world economy.

In discussing economic growth, particular emphasis must be placed on green growth. Indeed, this lies at the heart of sustainable development. In an effort to curb greenhouse gas emissions, Korea has set a voluntary reduction target of 30 per cent against the business-as-usual levels by 2020. Together, we will gradually shift the growth paradigm from an energy-intensive to a green growth economy.

As part of the efforts to promote the green growth strategy in the international community, we launched the Global Green Growth Institute last June. We hope that this institute will become an integral part of the global endeavour to move towards sustainable development as Korea strives to share green growth vision and assistance with developing countries.

On the peace and security front, peacekeeping operations have become the most visible and defining feature of the United Nations. The increasing demand and growing complexity of peacekeeping operations call for continuous improvement in the operation of the missions.

Strategic goals should be set more clearly. The troops should be deployed more swiftly. Operations should be conducted in a more professional and disciplined way. To this end, all stakeholders, including troop-contributing countries and financial contributors, should focus on close coordination and cooperation.

The Republic of Korea has been a committed contributor to United Nations peacekeeping efforts. Korea dispatched 240 contingent troops this year alone to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti to help rebuild the country shaken by a tragic earthquake. Currently, some 650 Korean soldiers are serving in 11 peacekeeping missions, including the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. We believe that our newly enacted law on participation in peacekeeping operations will further enhance our response capacity in United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations.

One of the most urgent security challenges today is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. It is imperative to further strengthen international disarmament and non-proliferation regimes built around the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In this regard, Korea welcomes the adoption of the Final Document at the 2010 NPT Review Conference in May. We trust that this hard-won achievement will lay the groundwork for future progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The nexus between weapons of mass destruction and terrorism also poses a grave risk to global security. With this shared understanding, the leaders at the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington, D.C., last April recognized the potentially catastrophic consequences of nuclear terrorism and committed to strengthening nuclear security. It was agreed that concrete steps for securing nuclear materials should be taken to prevent them from falling into the hands of terrorists. We look forward to follow-up discussions on

nuclear security at the second Nuclear Security Summit, which is to be held in Korea in 2012.

In August, President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea proposed a new vision of the peaceful reunification of Korea, which will serve to stabilize inter-Korean relations and ultimately bring about a reunified Korea. To make this vision reality, we will work earnestly to build three communities: a peace community to ensure security and peace on the Korean peninsula; an economic community to develop North Korea's economy and eventually achieve inter-Korean economic integration; and a community of the Korean nation which will ensure the dignity, freedom and human rights of all individuals.

However, this vision for peaceful reunification is not without obstacles. Sixty years after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, there still remain threats to peace on the Korean peninsula. A case in point is the sinking of the Republic of Korea's naval vessel, the Cheonan, by a North Korean torpedo attack on 26 March this year. The international community sent a firm and unified message to North Korea by adopting the Security Council presidential statement of 9 July. North Korea must take responsibility for its unprovoked attack and refrain from any further provocations.

The biggest obstacle in our path towards a peace community is the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue. Unless North Korea forgoes its nuclear weapons programme, no sustainable peace can be achieved on the Korean peninsula and beyond.

Through the adoption of Security Council resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874 (2009), the international community urged North Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. In order to secure the lifting of sanctions and the ending of isolation, North Korea should make the strategic decision to live up to its commitments to denuclearization. A nuclear-free North Korea would also open the way to saving its people from the current miserable human rights and humanitarian situation.

Last year, on this very occasion, President Lee proposed the "grand bargain" initiative: a single comprehensive agreement that encompasses all steps for North Korea's denuclearization and the five parties' corresponding measures. Together with the international community, we will work tirelessly to persuade North Korea to make the right choice — a choice that will ensure a better future for both its country and its people. Once North Korea demonstrates genuine change in its behaviour and attitude, my Government is prepared to engage in meaningful dialogue and cooperation with North Korea.

We are witnessing many global challenges that are testing the international community. These challenges cannot be addressed by one country alone or even by a group of countries. They summon us as global citizens to fulfil a common purpose. They call on the United Nations to assume the mantle of global leadership. In order to effectively address the increasingly diverse and interconnected challenges, the United Nations should heighten its reform efforts aimed at broadening its operational response capacity.

The launch of UN Women is a clear testimony to the world community's efforts towards this end. Korea commends that historic move to step up progress in meeting the needs of women and girls worldwide. UN Women will greatly contribute to enhancing system-wide coherence, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. We also welcome the recent appointment of Michelle Bachelet at its helm.

Furthermore, the upcoming review of the Human Rights Council represents an excellent opportunity to muster our collective efforts to make the Council more effective and efficient at fulfilling the promises we made at its establishment. The Republic of Korea looks forward to working closely with the international community in this joint effort.

No reform of the United Nations can be complete without Security Council reform. It is crucial that the Council be more representative, effective and accountable. To this end, the Republic of Korea will continue to play a constructive role in finding the widest possible agreement on the major issues relating to Council reform.

The challenges facing the United Nations are formidable. We may succeed in some endeavours and not in others, but we should not forget that the United Nations is the best source of hope for many who are suffering from armed conflicts, extreme poverty and human rights abuses across the globe. The Republic of Korea remains fully committed to playing its due part in the efforts of the United Nations to translate those hopes into reality.

The President *(spoke in French)*: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

The representative of the Sudan has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

I wish to remind him that statements made in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second one and must be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Elshareef (Sudan) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At this morning's meeting we heard the representative of the Netherlands express in his statement the refusal of his Government to accept that the President of my country, the Sudan, be permitted to travel to his country. He said that

> "it is unacceptable to the Dutch Government that someone like President Al-Bashir of the Sudan, against whom an arrest warrant is outstanding, should be allowed to move freely in a country that is an ICC partner". *(A/65/PV.16)*

I would like to tell the representative of the Netherlands that we are surprised by such a statement, which demonstrates an ignorance of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, because my country, the Sudan, is not a signatory of that Statute. It also shows a blatant ignorance of a principle of international law known even to junior law students — I repeat, junior students of the law. I am referring to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which stipulates that a State that is not a party to a treaty is not bound by that treaty's provisions.

I wish to call attention in the same context to a resolution issued by the African Union following the visit of the President of the Republic of the Sudan to Kenya and Chad and its affirmation of the commitment of all States members of the African Union to the decisions of the African Union in this matter. That statement expressed appreciation of the courageous stands of Kenya and Chad and their commitment to the decisions of the African Union.

Furthermore, we tell the representative of the Netherlands that what he has said is unacceptable. It is an audacious interference in the internal affairs of our country, because it is the right of any country to host whomever it wants to host. However, it seems that some countries are still moved by memories of past colonialism, the same heinous colonialism whereby such countries usurped the freedom and wealth of other nations and peoples.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.